

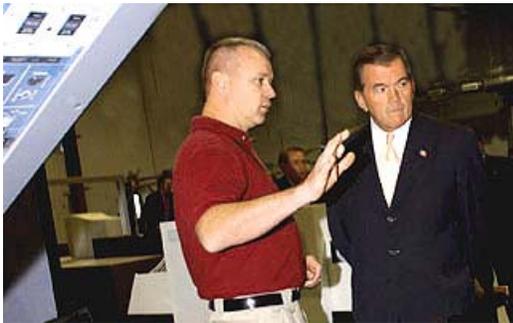


U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Press Release

December 3, 2003

SECRETARY RIDGE ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL TRANSFER OF FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE TO ICE



Washington, D.C. – Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge today announced the official transfer of the Federal Air Marshal Service from the Transportation Security Administration to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The move enhances homeland security and re-enforces DHS's commitment to air security by fusing all of the investigative resources within the Border and

Transportation Security Directorate at ICE, the largest investigative arm of Homeland Security. The move also expands Homeland Security's ability to respond to air security threats by creating a vastly larger surge potential of trained federal agents who can respond during times of crisis.

"This is the right move at the right time for the right reasons," said Secretary Ridge. "ICE offers the Air Marshal Service multiple investigative resources, such as additional access to intelligence, better coordination with other law enforcement agencies, and broader training opportunities. And the Federal Air Marshals bring unique law enforcement and air security resources to ICE."

Michael J. Garcia, ICE Acting Assistant Secretary, said that the FAMS are being integrated into ICE as one of six operational divisions dedicated to homeland security.

"This fusion will not only establish an integrated law enforcement presence in the aviation sector; it will enhance ICE's overall law enforcement capabilities and resources to enforce its mission, which is to detect and prevent vulnerabilities or violations that threaten the nation's homeland security," said Garcia. "Our goal at ICE is to create a seamless web of resources that can be used wherever the threat is greatest."

As it continues to integrate into the ICE organization, the Federal Air Marshal Service will maintain focus on its primary mission, which is promoting confidence in the nation's civil aviation system

through the effective deployment of Federal Air Marshals to detect, deter, and defeat hostile acts targeting U.S. air carriers, airports, passengers, and crew.

In order to prepare the FAMs for high-altitude surveillance, deterrence, and combat, the Federal Air Marshal Service sends each trainee to William J. Hughes Technical Center in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The stringent training program there includes behavioral observation, intimidation tactics, and close quarters self-defense. In addition, ICE's Federal Air Marshals are held to a higher standard for handgun accuracy than the officers of any other federal law enforcement agency.

“The Federal Air Marshals bring a dedicated and seasoned team of law enforcement veterans to ICE, and, in return, we gain valuable law enforcement tools,” said FAMS Director Tom Quinn. “Today, protecting the skies just got a little easier.”

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